

REMARKS

Claims 8, 9, 11, 13, 15, 18 and 19 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, independent claim 8 is amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claim 10, claims 9, 11 and 13 are amended to depend from claim 8 and to correct informalities, claim 15 is amended to correct informalities, claims 18 and 19 are added, and claims 10, 12, 14, 16 and 17 are canceled without prejudice to, or disclaimer of, the subject matter recited therein. The specification also is amended. No new matter is added. Reconsideration of this application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's indication that claim 10 recites allowable subject matter. Because independent claim 8 is amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claim 10 and because all pending claims depend from claim 8, all pending claims are allowable.

The Office Action objects to the drawings. The objection is obviated by the above cancellation of claim 14. Thus, it is respectfully requested that the objection be withdrawn.

The Office Action objects to the Abstract due to informalities. The objection is obviated by the amendments in the attached amended Abstract. Thus, it is respectfully requested that the objection be withdrawn.

The Office Action objects to the specification because of informalities. The objection is obviated by the above amendments to the specification. Thus, it is respectfully requested that the objections be withdrawn.

The Office Action objects to claims 9-16 due to informalities. The objection of claims 9, 11, 13, and 15 is obviated by the above amendments to these claims. The objection

of canceled claims 10, 12, 14 and 16 is moot. Thus, it is respectfully requested that the objections be withdrawn.


The Office Action rejects claims 8, 9, and 11-17 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Hirai U.S. Patent No. 6,379,115. The rejection of canceled claims 12, 14, 16 and 17 is moot. Because independent claim 8 is amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claim 10, all pending claims are allowable. Thus it is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

Added claims 18 and 19 also are patentable over the applied reference at least based on their dependency from independent claim 8, as well as for the additional features that these claims recite.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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WPB:VLO/emd

Attachment:
Petition for Extension of Time

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